

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Commission**

ITEM

11

INFORMATION

TOPIC

Lake Nutrient Standards, Background Information

Nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus are needed for healthy waters but high levels of these nutrients, a condition known as nutrient enrichment, have been linked to a number of water quality problems like nuisance algal blooms, low water clarity, and poor species diversity. Nutrient enrichment is often cited by states as one of the leading causes of waterbody use impairments. The EPA is asking states to adopt numeric nutrient criteria for lakes and reservoirs and streams and rivers and has provided states with guidance documents outlining various approaches to nutrient standards. Iowa's nutrient adoption plan outlines the approach that Iowa will take, with the adoption of nutrient standards for lakes and reservoirs first followed by streams and rivers.

The Commission will be provided with background information on nutrient issues for lakes and be briefed on the results of six years of lake monitoring regarding nutrient impacts. Additionally, various options for lake nutrient standards will be presented for general discussion. A document providing technical background information will be mailed to the Commissioners prior to the meeting.

In accordance with HF 2362 passed by the 2006 General Assembly, a water quality standards advisory committee comprised of "experts in the scientific fields relating to water quality, such as environmental engineering, aquatic toxicology, fisheries biology, and other life sciences and experts in the development of the appropriate levels of aquatic life protection and standards" will be convened to provide input and expertise to the Department in developing nutrient criteria for lakes. It is anticipated that a draft Notice of Intended Action will be presented to the Commission for information at its September 2006 meeting.

Jack Riessen, P.E.
Executive Officer
June 23, 2006